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EGYPT UNDER BRITISH CONTROL:

I. THE CONDITIONS OF BRITISH SUPREMACY;

II. REFORMING EFFORTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS;

III. FAILURES AND OMISSIONS;

IV. PRESENT OPPORTUNITIES AND OBLIGATIONS.

BY

H. R. FOX BOURNE,

Secretary of the Aborigines Protection Society.

SECOND AND ENLARGED EDITION.

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P. S. KING & SON, ORCHARD HOUSE, 2 & 4, GREAT SMITH STREET,
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PREFATORY NOTE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

THE first edition of this pamphlet, issued a few days before the prorogation of Parliament last December, was all but exhausted before the close of the year. The publication of a second edition, with a few small corrections and some important additions, has been delayed until now in the hope that it may be of service in connection with the inquiries and discussions for which opportunity will be sought in the Parliamentary Session about to be opened.

By way of quickening interest in and promoting debate on the Egyptian Question, especially under the fresh light thrown upon it by the Denshawai incident of last June, a small Egyptian Committee was started in the House of Commons in October, its object being to arrange for and assist in Parliamentary action in co-operation with the Aborigines Protection Society, whose Secretary acts as Honorary Secretary of the Egyptian Committee. Numerous questions were asked in the House of Commons by members of this Committee in the course of the few weeks' sittings of Parliament last autumn, and Mr. John M. Robertson, its most active member, has occupied the short winter vacation in visiting Egypt and making himself personally and intimately acquainted with the main points in the very complicated political and social problems now awaiting solution. The information obtained by Mr. Robertson cannot fail to be of great value in the efforts to hasten that solution which he and others propose to make in Parliament.

The present pamphlet is, by design, only a very brief and necessarily incomplete statement of the general situation, based almost entirely on official promises and admissions which have appeared from time to time in Parliamentary Papers. It is intended that other and similar statements shall follow, from time to time, dealing separately with some phases of the question here inadequately touched upon, if mentioned at all.

H. R. F. B.

Broadway Chambers, Westminster.
9th February, 1907.

EGYPT UNDER BRITISH CONTROL.

In the Denshawai incident, as it is called, we have notable illustration of the very unsatisfactory condition in which Egyptian affairs remain after four-and-twenty years of British occupation.

The Denshawai Warning.

On 13th June, 1906, five officers of the army of occupation, visiting the village of Denshawai, near Tantah and between Cairo and Alexandria, for a day's pigeon shooting, were attacked by a crowd of peasants anxious to save their property, and especially incensed by the presumably accidental wounding of a woman in the scuffle that ensued. Three of the British officers were more or less seriously injured, and one died from sunstroke after running four and a half miles in search of assistance. For the punishment of the offenders a Special Tribunal — under cover of a Khedivial Decree of 1895, which had only been once acted on in the interval—was set up, and on 27th June this tribunal, practically invested with the powers of a court-martial, sentenced four of the alleged ringleaders to death and nine to penal servitude—two of them, including the husband of the woman who had been shot, for life, one for fifteen years, six for seven years, and three for one year. Three others were sentenced to one year's imprisonment and fifty lashes apiece, and five more were let off with fifty lashes apiece. The remainder of the prisoners, numbering thirty-one, were acquitted. On the following morning, only fifteen days after the disturbance, the hangings and the floggings were "properly carried out" with "all possible humanity," as the Acting Consul-General reported (Parliamentary Papers, 'Egypt, Nos. 3 and 4, 1906').

Such summary and vindictive "justice"—for which there had, in previous years, been several precedents, less heinous perhaps, and at any rate less fully reported—would not have been tolerated in British India, which we hold and administer as a conquered territory. Egypt is still, in theory, a dependency of the Ottoman Empire, in the government of which Great Britain acts merely as temporary controller, ostensibly in the interests of its native population, as a foremost consideration, and also for the safeguarding of European interests in general as regards Egyptian loans and of British interests in particular as regards the Suez Canal.

When, in January, 1883, Lord Granville officially notified to the

Great Powers that the Arabi insurrection had been suppressed and order completely restored by the British army of occupation, he added that the British Government desired to withdraw its troops as soon as a system capable of protecting "the Khedive's authority" should be organised; and, whatever may have been the plans and wishes of the actual controllers of affairs, it is only recently that promises as to speedy retirement have ceased to be made. In 1887, indeed, the late Lord Salisbury seriously endeavoured to bring the British occupation to a close, and a convention to this end was arranged by the late Sir H. Drummond Wolff with the Porte; but the arrangement fell through as the Sultan, after the document had been signed, refused to ratify it.

For all that, the Denshawai incident and the proceedings consequent upon it show how thoroughly, in at least one direction, "the authority of the Khedive" has been systematised, not for enabling the Egyptians to do without a British army of occupation, but for subordinating them to the convenience of that army, and of other Europeans resident in the country or visiting it for their own pleasure or profit. In other directions, and as regards all other methods of despotism, the evidence is as conclusive.

This, surely, is a scandal, to say the least, which ought to be put an end to as soon as possible, and it can only be put an end to by such comprehensive and fundamental changes in the policy of the British Government and its representatives in Egypt as will enable the Egyptian people themselves, if they can, and with nothing but generous assistance and encouragement from their present controllers, to work out their own "salvation" by safer and worthier methods than those which were ruthlessly wrecked when Arabi was overthrown in 1882.

I. The Conditions of British Supremacy.

How it came about.

The steps by which, between 1869 and 1899, British mastery in Egypt has been reached could not be stated more clearly and concisely than they have been by Mr. Edward Dicey in the following extract from the preface to his 'Story of the Khedivate' (1902):—

"The construction of the Suez Canal compelled England, as mistress of India, to regard the ascendancy of any European Power in Egypt as a source of peril to her Empire. The extravagance of Ismail Pasha, and the indebtedness which Egypt under his reign contracted abroad, necessitated international intervention by the European creditors. The Arabi mutiny led to the massacres of Alexandria, and to the armed intervention of Great Britain. The campaign which ended at Tel-el-Kebir brought about the military occupation of Egypt by British troops. The occupation, which was intended to be temporary, became permanent owing to the insurrection of the Mahdi in the Sudan. The necessity of rendering Egypt capable of defending herself against external attack and internal disturbance led England to undertake the reorganisation of Egypt under English supervision. The system of supervision developed, by the logic of facts, into British administration, and finally the reconquest of the Sudan by the Anglo-Egyptian army, converted our nominal control into a virtual protectorate."

Lord Dufferin's Mission.

It was after the overthrow of Arabi, and with a view to "the settlement of Egypt," that Lord Dufferin, then in Constantinople was sent to Cairo. Earl Granville's letter of instructions, dated November 3rd, 1882, contained the following:—

"While retaining your post of Ambassador at the Porte, your Excellency will advise the Government of the Khedive in the arrangements which will have to be made for re-establishing His Highness's authority, and providing for the future well-being of all classes of the population. The success of the military operations undertaken by Her Majesty's Government to suppress the late rebellion in Egypt has placed them in a position of authority and of corresponding responsibility in regard to the future government of that country.

"Her Majesty's Government, while desiring that the British occupation should last for as short a time as possible, feel bound not to withdraw from the task thus imposed upon them until the administration of affairs has been reconstructed on a basis which will afford satisfactory guarantees for the maintenance of peace, order, and prosperity in Egypt, and for fulfilment of

obligations towards foreign Powers. These objects are in the real interest of Egypt, of this country, and of Europe."—(Parliamentary Paper, 'Egypt No. 2, 1883,' p. 11.)

To like effect was the circular dispatch addressed by Earl Granville to the European Powers on January 3rd, 1883, in which he said :—

"Although for the present a British force remains in Egypt for the preservation of public tranquillity, Her Majesty's Government are desirous of withdrawing it as soon as the state of the country, and the organisation of proper means for the maintenance of the Khedive's authority, will admit of it. In the meanwhile, the position in which Her Majesty's Government are placed towards His Highness imposes upon them the duty of giving advice* with the object of securing that the order of things to be established shall be of a satisfactory character, and possess the elements of stability and progress."—(*Ibid.*, p. 34.)

The few months that Lord Dufferin spent in Egypt before his return to Constantinople early in May, 1883, were usefully employed by him in arranging with Sherif Pasha, the enlightened Prime Minister of the Khedive Tewfik, the numerous and valuable schemes of reform which are detailed in his memorable General Report of February 6th ('Egypt, No. 6, 1883'), and as regards the carrying out of which the main responsibility was thrown on the Egyptian Government. To Sherif Pasha he wrote on April 29th :—

"There is no point on which you and I have so thoroughly been agreed as on the necessity of its being understood by all concerned that the governmental system about to be inaugurated should possess the character of permanence and stability. As long as men's minds are shaken by the expectation of change, every public, private, commercial, and political interest in the country is compromised and endangered. I therefore do not hesitate to assure you that the new order of things you are creating, with the hearty approval and concurrence of the Queen's Government, is one which is destined and intended both to succeed and to endure."—('Egypt, No. 14, 1883,' p. 65.)

Lord Cromer's Controllership.

There is no reason for supposing that Mr. Gladstone's Government —and Lord Salisbury's, which succeeded it—were not honest in their repeated promises that the British occupation should cease as soon as the Egyptians could be trusted to manage their own affairs with any

* Lord Milner, himself an adept in such delicacies of speech, says that the phrase "giving advice" was a "charming euphemism of the best Granvillian brand. For the advice of an armed man in possession of your property is apt to be something more than a recommendation ; it is an order."—('England in Egypt,' fourth edition, p. 27.)

advantage to themselves or without injury to other people. And no one can deny that the prolongation and subsequent modifications of arrangements intended to be merely temporary were well-meant, if not inevitable—still less that, with all their shortcomings and failures, they have contributed to and rendered possible many important reforms. Nor, doubtless, could a better agent than Lord Cromer have easily, or even possibly, been found for performance of the task. But with all his zeal and all his skill, Lord Cromer has failed to bring about, in twenty-four years, the millennium of benevolent despotism for which, in case of annexation, Lord Dufferin thought five would have sufficed.

Its Inherent Faults.

When in 1883 he returned to Cairo to succeed Sir Edward Malet, and to give effect to Lord Dufferin's proposals, Sir Evelyn Baring, as Lord Cromer then was, found himself, of course, in a most anomalous position, and one in which the duties assigned to him were perhaps too conflicting to be satisfactorily performed by any one. He had been there already as Financial Controller, and was pre-eminently fitted for the business which was really the main object of the British occupation of Egypt—that is, the protection and advancement of European bondholders' interests and the rescue of the country from the insolvency consequent upon the Khedive Ismail's reckless extravagance in the years before his deposition in 1879. In these and like concerns it was necessary and proper that the British Consul-General and the other Europeans associated with him should be able to speak with authority, even at the risk of seriously interfering with the Khedive's Ministers, and with the officials under them, as well as with the Khedive himself in so far as he assumed arbitrary powers inconsistent with the tutelage he had agreed to submit to. This—rightly or wrongly, and involving a good deal of dictatorial "advice" on many matters only indirectly connected with finance—was the course presumably intended from the first, and certainly sanctioned as soon as occasion arose, by the British Government. Among the reforms for which Lord Dufferin was instructed by Earl Granville to prepare the way were :—

"Reorganisation of the army and police force; introduction of improvements in the machinery of those branches of the public service which are not managed wholly or in great part by Europeans; the gradual reduction of the foreign element, and the increased employment of native Egyptians, in all branches of the Administration; the establishment of an improved system of justice for natives; the equal taxation of foreigners and Egyptians; the

establishment of institutions favourable to the prudent development of liberty, either by the reassembling of the Chamber of Notables or by such other measures as may be best calculated to secure that end; and prevention of the slave trade and slavery."—('Egypt, No. 2, 1883,' p. 11.)

And on 4th January, 1884, insisting on the withdrawal of the Egyptian troops from Wadi Halfa, Earl Granville thus wrote to Lord Cromer:—

"I hardly need point out that in important questions, where the administration and safety of Egypt are at stake, it is indispensable that Her Majesty's Government should, so long as the provisional occupation of the country by English troops continues, be assured that the advice which, after full consideration of the views of the Egyptian Government, they may feel it their duty to tender to the Khedive should be followed. It should be made clear to the Egyptian Ministers and Governors of provinces that the responsibility which for the time rests on England obliges Her Majesty's Government to insist on the adoption of the policy which they recommend, and that it will be necessary that those Ministers and Governors who do not follow this course should cease to hold their offices."

It was manifestly necessary that the British Government, after assuming such heavy responsibilities in Egypt, should reserve to itself the power of despotic interference in vital and far-reaching concerns like the one here referred to. On this occasion, because they objected to the cessation of operations in the Sudan after the fall of Khartoum in 1885, Sherif Pasha and his colleagues had to resign, and, though Lord Cromer found Nubar Pasha, his successor, more pliant in some respects, there was frequent friction with him, and yet more with the next Prime Minister, Riaz Pasha. From both these able, if erratic, patriots, according to their lights, the British Consul received valuable assistance, but over both he sometimes had good reason for asserting a mastery which was more than irksome to them and by no means wholly beneficial to Egypt. For at least the first twelve years of the British occupation, in fact, the anomalous position assigned to Lord Cromer—and, there can be no doubt, his stern sense of public duty, far more than any weakness for personal aggrandisement—led him to treat the Khedive and his ministers in ways that forced them to succumb to his will, and rendered practically impossible, under his *régime* at any rate, the realisation of Lord Dufferin's vision of a self-governing Egypt. The three earlier and greater statesmen who alternately worked with him or bore his yoke having disappeared within the first dozen years, the generally complaisant Khedive Tewfik having also disappeared, and the hotheadedness of youth having been overcome in the present

Khedive, the way was cleared for full exercise in the next dozen years of the "benevolent despotism" in which the present Prime Minister and his colleagues are obedient agents, and of which the Khedive Abbas II. appears to be a shrewd but passive and self-respecting critic. "I have often had," Mr. Edward Dicey reports that Nubar Pasha said to him, "to assume responsibility for a policy which I did not originate, and often did not approve. If the policy succeeded, the British authorities in Egypt claimed the credit. If it failed, it was I who bore the blame" ('The Story of the Khedivate,' p. 436).

That arrangement has since been considerably developed, with almost complete reversal of the expressed intentions of the Consul-General in the early days of his autocracy. "Let the financial situation and the affairs of the Sudan once be satisfactorily settled," Lord Cromer had written to Lord Granville in January, 1885, "and there can be no reason whatever why the present policy of Her Majesty's Government should not be continued, and should not lead to results which will be alike honourable to England and beneficial to Egypt." He added:—

"The way in which I understand that policy is that in very exceptional matters of first-rate importance Her Majesty's Government expects that, so long as the British occupation lasts, the Egyptian Government shall follow the advice given to them by Her Majesty's Government; that in all matters connected with the internal administration of the country a very wide latitude should be left to the Egyptian Government; that the English officers lent to the Egyptian Government should rely on their own tact, ability, and force of character, rather than on constant diplomatic support in respect to matters of detail, to ensure due consideration being given to any views which they may advance; and that the action of the British Representative is generally to be limited to the occasional offer of friendly advice on questions of considerable importance. That is the policy which is now being carried out in Egypt. It is working very well. I see no reason why it should be changed.....

"It is frequently stated that the English Representative in Egypt is somewhat in the position of a Resident at the Court of a native prince of India..... It is also frequently stated that constant reference is made to me on questions of detail. Statements of this sort convey a wholly inaccurate idea of the duties which I perform in Egypt. I look upon it as essential that there should be no division of authority in Egypt, that the Egyptian Government should feel that it is not only nominally but really responsible for the conduct of the Egyptian Administration, and that the action of the British Representative should not be such as to weaken or undermine the authority of the Khedive and his Ministers."—('Egypt, No. 15, 1885,' p. 45.)

We are bound to assume that Lord Cromer has honestly endeavoured to carry out that policy. Yet, more than twenty years later, on 7th August, 1905, Earl Percy, then Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, informed Mr. Henniker Heaton in the House of Commons that "the administration of the country is conducted by the Khedive and his Ministers, with the advice and *under the supervision* of Lord Cromer as the responsible Representative of His Majesty's Government," and that "the Egyptian Government are *under an obligation* to follow Lord Cromer's advice."

The Sudan Wars.

A passing reference here will suffice to the Sudan wars which, apart from their other disasters, were a main obstacle to the carrying out of the British Government's original Egyptian policy. Scarcely had Arabi Pasha been disposed of by his deportation to Ceylon in December, 1882, before the growth of the Mahdi's rising against Egyptian misrule in the Sudan furnished excuse or necessity, but no sort of justification, for the expedition of 1884, which resulted in the fall of Khartum and the death of General Gordon. After eleven years of irritable and spasmodic hostilities, involving constant anxiety and outlay, the expedition to Dongola in 1896 issued in a three years' campaign, by which the supposed interests of Great Britain, if not of Egypt, were advanced, but which was only concluded in 1899 under conditions rendering it almost unavoidable that Great Britain—however, and for whatever length of time, maintaining "a veiled protectorate" over Egypt—should be in reality sole custodian of the region still known as the Egyptian Sudan, but partly at the expense of Egypt.

The Capitulations.

Yet more embarrassing—seeing that, though it involved less outlay of money, it rendered practically impossible the proper working out, and often even the initiation, of many of the reforms promised by Lord Dufferin — was the legacy of old treaties known as the Capitulations, with which Egypt was saddled when Great Britain assumed responsibility for its good government.

These Capitulations—the earliest of which dates back to the year 1173, when Saladin accorded certain privileges and exemptions to citizens of the Pisan Republic lodging and trading in Ottoman territory, and all of them originally compacts between the Porte and (besides the United States and Brazil) twelve European nations—continued to be considered binding on Egypt after it ceased to be in any real sense a dependency of Turkey. Availing himself of the learned description of

Mr. Van Dyck in his reports to the United States Senate in 1881 and 1882, the late Sir H. Drummond Wolff thus reported in 1886:—

"The provisions of the Capitulations may be shortly summarised under nine heads: (1) Access for foreigners to Moslem territory with permission to trade, but not to practise any calling or profession, nor to hold lands; (2) Religious freedom; (3) Exemption from taxes, except duties on merchandise; (4) Rights of foreigners amongst each other to be judged by their ambassadors and consuls; (5) Presence of the consular dragoman before an Ottoman judge in civil causes between natives and foreigners; (6) In crimes and offences committed by foreigners against natives, the jurisdiction used to be reserved for the native judge; but by recent treaties —which extend, through the favoured nation clause, to all nationalities— the competent judge is the consul of the defendant, not the local tribunal; (7) Inviolability of the foreigner's domicile. In case of urgency the Government officers cannot enter the dwelling-house of a foreign delinquent without having previously notified the ambassador or consul, or being accompanied by his deputy; (8) Freedom of bequest; (9) Prohibition to ambassadors and consuls to give protection to Ottoman or rayah subjects and vassals."—('Egypt, No. 5, 1887,' p. 2.)

As Sir H. Drummond Wolff pointed out in the same report:—

"When these privileges were originally granted the relative position of foreigners to Ottomans was singularly different from what it is now. It is needless to refer to the attitude adopted at the time by Eastern potentates even to ambassadors and the general contempt felt for those not professing the Mussulman faith. The Capitulations were, therefore, granted as favours in compassion and probably contempt.....For many years—nay, for centuries —the system worked satisfactorily. The consul was the judge, administering justice by blending, according to his lights, the law of his own country with Levantine usage. But the Crimean war produced a sudden revolution. Not only did the influx of foreigners to the East add to the calls of the consular court, but the very war itself entailed law-suits for contracts and other transactions involving large sums of money. The old and rough system of justice no longer sufficed. The sense of the Capitulations was expanded to modern requirements. Codes were drawn up. Orders in Council and Acts of Parliament were passed by which the privileges conceded centuries before to small insignificant groups of foreign traders and seamen were utilised for the creation of courts with the solemnity, refinement, and technicalities of European tribunals; and appeals were established to the higher courts of the different countries represented in the East by their consuls. The result was the creation of large communities throughout the territory of the Sultan exempted from the ordinary obligations of denizens, and maintaining, as against not only the sovereign power, but against each other, a continuous

and jealous rivalry. In Egypt the inconvenience entailed by this order of things made itself more apparent than elsewhere. Its geographical position and commercial activity have long rendered it the residence of important foreign communities, and, the trade of the country being condensed and absorbed by the two towns of Cairo and Alexandria, the jealousies are more manifest and acute from being more centralised."

Remaining in full force in Egypt until 1872, the Capitulations have since then been modified from time to time in some respects, and especially as regards the Mixed Tribunals which had been started in 1867. They were at length brought within what seems to be reasonable distance of abolition by the Anglo-French Agreement of 1904. They are still, however, grave obstacles to such development of Egypt under English tutelage as Lord Dufferin contemplated and as Lord Cromer has so long been labouring to bring about, with excellent intentions and praiseworthy zeal, no doubt, but not with uniform discretion or by any means adequate success.

Of Lord Cromer's principal efforts and achievements, and those of his colleagues and subordinates, since he became responsible for the control of Egyptian affairs, as well as of their failures and omissions, and of abuses waiting to be removed, brief account may now be given.

II. Reforming Efforts and Achievements.

An important Parliamentary Paper issued in 1885 ('Egypt, No. 15, 1885') reproduces twenty-five 'Reports on the State of Egypt and the Progress of Administrative Reforms,' which had been compiled by Lord Cromer (at that time Sir Evelyn Baring) and his assistants, showing how much had been done before February, 1885, towards accomplishing the task entrusted to them.

"The three greatest abuses connected with the government of Egypt in the past," wrote Lord Cromer, "have been (1) the use of the courbash, (2) the *corvée*, (3) the corruption among the official classes." It is not surprising that he had much more success in dealing with the first and second abuses than with the third.

The Courbash.

Of the first he wrote, after quoting from the reports of several consular agents in various districts, to the effect that the courbash as an instrument employed in the collection of taxes and extortion of evidence (the two principal official purposes to which it was applied) had been almost abandoned in the better controlled parts, and was used in others much less frequently than formerly.

"The credit of having initiated this bold reform belongs entirely to Lord Dufferin, at whose instance a Khedivial Decree was published in March, 1883, prohibiting altogether the use of the courbash. I conceive that at the time this decree was issued most people who had been long resident in Egypt would have thought that one of two things would happen, that is to say, either that the decree would not be obeyed, or that the administration of the country would come to a deadlock. Such certainly would have been my own opinion."—(P. 10.)

While theoretically approving of the reform—which, however well carried out by officials overlooked by zealous superiors, seems to have had much less effect in out-of-the-way villages and on private estates—Lord Cromer, indeed, apparently inclined to the view expressed by one of his assistants.

"The summary suppression of the use of the courbash has had a very bad effect on the population, as by this measure the sheikhs of villages have been deprived of most of their power and authority, and the fellahs, having no fear of the whip, and, being improvident and lazy by nature, it is a very difficult matter, under the present *régime*, to compel them to do their duty, especially as the reorganisation of the prisons has rendered them so

comfortable that the fellah has no longer any fear of imprisonment, and makes no secret of saying that he is better treated in prison than at home, and the only privation he has to put up with is the temporary separation from his harem."—(P. 9.)

The penalties imposed on eight of the prisoners implicated in the Denshawai disturbance show that flogging has not yet been abandoned, even in so-called legal proceedings, and the Khedivial Decree of 1883 has always been liable to abuse. It has, however, brought about a great reform, along with many others in the same direction, such as the improvement in prison management deplored by the consular agent just quoted from, similar improvements in hospitals, and so forth, which have undoubtedly been of immense benefit to the Egyptian fellaheen, not withstanding their inadequacy and the alarm with which they were regarded by some of the authorities. So it was especially as regards the *corvée*, for which a Khedivial Decree, dated 25th January, 1885, allowed a ransom to be paid at moderate rates in certain districts. "The people subject to forced labour" in those districts were, for the current year, "and as an experiment," authorised to redeem themselves on payment of from 15 to 30 piastres per man, according to the locality, it being stipulated that "the villages that do not wish to redeem themselves must furnish their forced labour in kind," and that "the sum representing the redemption at the above rates will be distributed and levied in each of the villages anxious to redeem themselves on the feddans which form the zamam of the village, so as to distribute the dues in proportion to the benefit which each receives from the irrigation works."—(P. 55).

The Corvée and Irrigation.

To Sir Colin Scott Moncrieff, as director of the irrigation works which were in themselves a stupendous boon to Egyptians of all classes, is due in large measure this preliminary step towards the abolition of forced labour. A week after the date of the Khedivial Decree he wrote to Lord Cromer:—

"From my first arrival in Egypt I have been deeply interested in the *corvée* question. Apart from any considerations of humanity, *corvée* labour is the most unwieldy of machinery. Its uncertainty, the amount of supervision it requires, the slowness with which it works, must all strike the engineer used to employing gangs of labour paid by their outturn. Longer acquaintance with the country has shown me how unequal is its burden, falling nearly altogether on the poor, while it opens a door for corruption to all engaged in it. No one has urged me so earnestly as your Excellency to

study how Egypt could be freed from its *corvée*, and there is no resisting the evidence that, whether we would or not, we must render ourselves independent of it, for *corvée* labour belongs to the *régime* of the courbash, and the land possesses no other weapon for compelling the peasant to work month after month away from his village, unpaid and unfed. The bulk of *corvée* labour is on clearing the canals of the mud deposited during high Nile, and the first thing was to see how the labour could be dispensed with altogether, that is how the alluvial deposit could be floated on to the fields and prevented from settling in the bottom of the canals. A good deal is possible in this direction.....Yet I cannot look forward to the time when there will not be annual heavy canal clearances, which must be done if the fields are to be watered.

"Your Excellency has approved, and the Council of Ministers has now sanctioned, an experiment from which I look for the happiest results. In four districts comprising half of the largest province of Lower Egypt, the privilege of ransom from *corvée* labour, hitherto possessed by only a few, is this year accorded to all. As there are practical difficulties in levying a tax on individuals, it is ruled that the ransom money due by a village—which is in proportion to the male population of the village—is to be levied from the landowners, in proportion to the size of their holdings. I trust this is the beginning of the end of the *corvée*, and that in a very few years forced labour will have ceased throughout Egypt, replaced by a rate on the land varying from 10 to 2 piastres per feddan (say from 2*s*. to 5*d*. per acre). With this fund I look forward to maintaining the canals in better condition than they are at present, by the use of free-paid labour."—(P. 50.)

Both expectations have been realised to a large and very gratifying extent. If much yet remains to be done in improving and completing the water-supply of Egypt, the achievements of the past twenty years have been amazing, and, though the *corvée*, like the courbash, is still available to Government officials as a last resort in cases of extreme emergency, and occasionally indulged in more or less clandestinely by private individuals, the fellaheen have been virtually delivered from this form of slavery, and, in spite of all other drawbacks, have derived very material and widespread advantage from the opportunities of profiting by their own exertions which are now afforded to them.

Much excuse may be found for the smallness of Lord Cromer's success in dealing with the third of the great abuses he set himself to attack, "the corruption among the official classes." On 8th February, 1885, he wrote to Lord Granville:—

Official Corruption.

"It is almost hopeless to expect that venality will cease to exist amongst

Egyptian officials until a public spirit has grown up, at all events amongst the upper classes, which condemns the proffer or receipt of a bribe as a dishonourable act.....It is but a few years ago that the Egyptian Government acted in such a way as positively to encourage corruption. It was hopeless to expect purity amongst a body of badly paid and uneducated officials, most of whom had families to support, when their salaries were often months in arrear, as was frequently the case when I first came to Egypt in 1877."

By paying salaries punctually at the end of each month, by dispensing with redundant officials and somewhat increasing the stipends of those deemed fittest to be retained, and in other ways, with the efficient help of colleagues like Sir Edgar Vincent and Mr. Sheldon Amos, Lord Cromer brought about considerable improvements, making, at any rate, possible more vital reforms than have as yet been secured.

In the efforts to check improper revenue-raising and wasteful expenditure, which were his special task, Sir Edgar Vincent claimed to have made a "great step towards the abolition of backsheesh." As he pointed out,

"As long as it is worth bribing an official there will be in Egypt both people to give bribes and officials to receive them. The only immediately effective means by which we can put an end to the curse of backsheesh are (1) by punishing the offender with dismissal, and (2) by rendering it a waste of money to give backsheesh. Once remove the decision of a case from the arbitrary will of an individual, and decide it according to fixed regulations, and you eliminate the motive which induces the giving of backsheesh, and with this the opportunity of receiving it. Our object should be to replace individual will by law, and to substitute administrative jurisprudence for the arbitrary decision of officials."—(P. 53.)

There was equal good sense in the policy pursued by Mr. Sheldon Amos, the purifier of the legal and judicial machinery, who reported :—

"My belief is that, so far as the Courts of Justice in the provinces go, the area of corruption has now been brought within measurable limits. It may be said, indeed, that, under the old system, the irregular payments by suitors to officials of all sorts, who were capable of facilitating or obstructing the path of justice, were so usual, and so little denounced by public opinion or punished by law, that they resembled legal Court fees rather than extortionate exactions. But their arbitrariness and variability heavily weighted the poor and friendless. Under the new procedure the substitution of a generally new class of officials and methods of procedure before trial, the publication of stringent laws against bribery and intimidating, and the facility

of criminal prosecution, cannot but have shaken the old system of underhand traffic in justice to its roots."—(P. 58.)

In Mr. Sheldon Amos's recommendations, summarised by him as follows in 1885, there were several shrewd proposals not yet acted upon :—

Judicial Reforms.

"(1) Economising judicial power by multiplying the number of Courts of one or two judges each, and only for the Court of Appeal having a three-judge—or, for exceptional cases, a five-judge—Chamber.

"(2) Substituting for the indefinite right of appeal now enjoyed the right and duty of revision by the Court of Appeal.

"(3) Constant and ambulating inspection of all Courts, including the judges and the Government prosecuting department, by some authority not wholly dependent on the Ministry of Justice.

"(4) Introduction into the Codes of Criminal and Civil Procedure of the English or Anglo-Indian procedure as applicable, say, to all penal offences where the punishment does not exceed two years' imprisonment, and to all civil wrongs where the sum of the injury does not exceed, say, £50. In the larger towns a civil and criminal judge should be sitting every day.

"(5). Redistributing what is known as the 'instruction' of all penal cases—*i.e.*, the portion which in England belongs to the police and magisterial inquiry—between the police and the Juge d'Instruction (or Judge of the Tribunal of First Instance delegated for this purpose). This would ensure the preservation of perishable evidence, the prevention of multifarious inquiries of an identical kind, and also of loss of time in sending for an official often at a great distance.

"(6) Raising the status of the judges: negatively, by not needlessly interfering with them, and positively, by finding ways of raising their rank above that of policemen and clerks. This degradation of the official office is borrowed rather from France than from England or India.

"The Egyptian native judge is timid and disposed to shrink from responsibility, and is only learning habits of judicial independence. There is still a practice of the Egyptian Government, even pursued by English officials in high places, of publicly complaining or of privately remonstrating against judgments which are adverse to Government departments. This is a bad example to set to private suitors, and must prevent a spirit of true judicial independence ever being acquired."—(P. 59.)

There can be no doubt, however, that—notwithstanding the prejudicial effects of the rivalry maintained between the Mixed Tribunals and Consular Courts on the one hand and the Native Courts on the other, perhaps to some extent in consequence of that rivalry—there has

been great improvement in the machinery for the administration of justice in Egypt since it was brought under British supervision.

The same may be said of other institutions which need not be specifically referred to in this brief survey.

The Advantage to Foreigners.

It must be clearly understood, of course, that the main, and practically the only, reason for the British occupation and administration of Egypt is, as it has been from the first, the advantage expected from it, not to the Egyptian natives, but to the British occupants and administrators, together with, as a corollary, that of the other European communities having political, financial, and other interests at stake in the country. In this respect no one will deny that the efforts of Lord Cromer and his colleagues have been almost invariably business-like and statesman-like, and their achievements for the most part eminently successful.

In 1883, the first year of the British occupation, the capital of the Egyptian Debt amounted to £E96,457,000, subject to a charge of £E4,268,000 for interest and sinking fund. In 1891 it attained the maximum of £E106,802,000. Profitable expenditure on irrigation works, railways, and so forth, as well as the heavy expenses of the Sudan war, had necessitated new loans, and the profitable, if not the unprofitable, outlay continued even on a larger scale after 1891. Yet in 1905 the total, reduced by gradual repayments, was only £E96,484,000, of which £E8,770,000 is held by the Government, leaving but £E87,714,000 in the hands of the public, on which the interest and sinking fund charge to the Egyptian taxpayers is £E3,378,000.—('Egypt, No. 1, 1906,' pp. 37, 38.)

This, however burdensome to the taxpayers (representing as it does about 30 per cent. of the whole national expenditure in 1905), shows, at any rate, good financing. It is not at all surprising that, from the bondholders' point of view, Lord Cromer's administration is so satisfactory that it has much lessened, if not altogether overcome, international jealousies which formerly were rampant. In other ways, moreover, the British occupation has won the favour of foreigners as well as of our own countrymen, seeing how many find lucrative employment in the various branches of the Egyptian public service, or in the commercial pursuits that are being constantly developed, and to how many others Egypt has come to be a fashionable resort of health-seekers and pleasure-seekers.

The Advantage to Egyptians.

Nor is it only to foreigners interested in Egypt that the British occupation has been in many ways beneficial. Although the Suez Canal and the irrigation works, the docks and the railways, and all the other engineering and kindred improvements that have been effected and are still going on, together with the cost of the army of occupation and payment of interest on the huge legacy of National Debt for which the British authorities are now responsible, absorb considerably more than half of the revenue collected under their guidance, the load of taxation falling on the natives is far less than it was in former days, averaging £1 1*s.* 2*d.* per head of the population in 1882, it had sunk in 1902 to 16*s.* 2*d.*; "and, I do not doubt," Lord Cromer wrote in March, 1906, "that it is a good deal lower now." The native population of Egypt has nearly doubled in the past quarter of a century, as a consequence of the increased productiveness of the country brought about by improved irrigation and the like; and though there are much preventible poverty and degradation, and in some localities and some conditions of life things may be worse than they were, there has been great advance in the general average of wealth and intelligence. The inhabitants now have far more and far better return for their money in improved legislation and increased opportunities of development than they could have hoped for in the times of Ismail. These benefits are being added to every year. Lord Cromer's recent reports show that, notwithstanding increased administrative expenditure, amounting to £E109,000 in 1904 and to £E556,000 in 1905, of which large parts were in the interests of the natives, taxes had been abolished or reduced to the extent of £E300,000 in the first of those years and £E332,000 in the second, the largest and most serviceable surrender of revenue in 1906 being for £E175,000 on account of the abolition of the salt monopoly.

Welcome, however, as these and such like instances of good government may be to the natives, they have strong grounds for complaining that the advantages accruing to them from the British occupation are not much greater, and that in some ways they are grievous sufferers by it.

III. Failures and Omissions.

The Promised Political Machinery.

The failure of the British Government and its Representative to do anything effective towards qualifying the people of Egypt for the self-government promised by Lord Dufferin may be regarded as the chief of all their faults, seeing that this failure lessens, if it does not destroy, the value of the many benefits that, in various minor directions, they have conferred on the country.

It was not so intended. On 1st May, 1883, Lord Dufferin obtained the Khedive Tewfik's signature to an Organic Law, "creating new political institutions for Egypt" ('Egypt, Nos. 6 and 19, 1883'). These, according to his synopsis, were as follows :—

"1. The Village Constituency, composed of representatives of each circumscription, chosen by manhood suffrage, who are the depositors of the village vote.

"2. The Provincial Council, varying in number from four to eight, chosen by spokesmen of the villages.

"3. The Legislative Council, consisting of twenty-eight [now thirty] members, of whom twelve [now fourteen] are nominated by the Khedive on the advice of his Ministers, and sixteen are elected by the Provincial Councils.

"4. The General Assembly of eighty members, eight Ministers, twenty-eight members of the Legislative Council, and forty-six Delegates elected by the spokesmen of the villages.

"5. Eight Ministers responsible to the Khedive.

"6. His Highness the Khedive."

The Organic Law has never been repealed or materially altered. But only so much of it as suited the convenience of the British authorities has been enforced.

The Khedive, of course, serves as a notable example in a peculiar sense of the truth of Thiers's description of a constitutional monarch as "one who reigns but does not govern," having for his supreme mentor — to give him his full title — the British Agent, Consul-General and Minister Plenipotentiary.

Each of the Egyptian Ministers of State, moreover, now limited to six, has at least one British adviser, or otherwise styled controller empowered to give him much more than advice.

The Village Constituencies are non-existent, except in so far as they may be considered to be embodied in the principal residents, and

consequently the "spokesmen," of the several villages in each mudirieh.

In like manner the Parish Council supposed to exist in each mudirieh —and supposed "to vote any extraordinary taxes for the province, to be consulted on changes of boundary, roads, canals, irrigation, fairs, &c.," and so forth—is merely represented or personated by the mudir, its contemplated *ex officio* president.

The General Assembly is scarcely less a sham. It is supposed to meet for a short session in each alternate year; but this is a mere formality, seeing that "the duties it has to discharge," which, according to Sir H. Drummond Wolf, "are principally confined to the creation of any new taxes, to the issue of a new loan, to the construction or suppression of canals or railways passing through several mudiriehs and to the general classification of lands in the country with reference to taxation on real property" ('Egypt, No. 5, 1887,' p. 26), are all matters of imperial policy, far too important to be entrusted to it.

The Legislative Council.

Consequently the Legislative Council is the only political institution now making any pretence, or anything more than a pretence, in the direction of national self-government. Meeting in February, April, June, August, October, and December each year, it contains in the sixteen Notables "elected" or "delegated" for terms of six years as representatives of Cairo, Alexandria, and the fourteen provinces, a nominal majority over the fourteen members nominated for life by the Government; but this, it is hardly necessary to point out, leaves the British authorities practically masters of the situation, especially as the Council is, at best, no more than an advisory committee.

In proposing it, Lord Dufferin wrote :—

"What is really needed is the constant supervision of a smaller, more selected, and more highly organised body, which will always be at hand to assist the Ministers in the elaboration of their measures, to enlighten them as to the needs and wishes of the country, and to act as a check on their arbitrary inclinations."—('Egypt, No. 6, 1883,' p. 3.)

Eight years later, in 1891, Lord Cromer wrote with reference to the general question :—

"No one, and certainly not Lord Dufferin—under whose auspices the plan was conceived—supposed that institutions such as those I have described would readily take root in the somewhat uncongenial soil of Egypt. Symptoms, however, are not wanting from which it may be inferred that the Legislative Council and Assembly may eventually prove useful adjuncts to

the Government of Egypt. What they most of all require for the time being is a little sympathy and encouragement, and, above all, the exercise of great care and attention to explain to the elected members the reasons for the adoption of any measure which is submitted by the Government for their consideration."—('Egypt, No. 3, 1892.')

Commenting on the foregoing sentences, Lord Dufferin himself wrote in 1892 :—

"These institutions were a good deal ridiculed at the time, but as it was then uncertain how long we were going to remain, or rather how soon the Turks might not be reinvested with their ancient supremacy, I desired to erect some sort of barrier, however feeble, against their intolerable tyranny. On the other hand, I felt that, if English superintendence were to endure, they might be fostered and educated into fairly useful institutions, proving a convenient channel through which the European element in the Government might obtain an insight into the inner mind and the less obvious wants of the native population."—(Sir Alfred Lyall's 'Life of the Marquis of Dufferin,' vol. ii. p. 260.)

Contrary views are here presented to us. According to Lord Dufferin, the Legislative Council was to be a sort of school for the instruction of British rulers as to the needs and likings of the Egyptian people. According to Lord Cromer, it was to be a sort of school for the instruction of the Egyptian people as to the requirements and intentions of the British rulers. Perhaps both views were met to some extent. In any case, however, the Legislative Council has not been an adequate and progressive self-governing institution. In his Annual Report for 1905 Lord Cromer sums up its history and forecasts its future :—

"The Legislative Council may be said to have passed through three separate phases of existence. For the first few years of the British occupation it attracted little notice. The country was in danger of being throttled by bankruptcy, whilst the affairs of the Sudan occupied so prominent a place in Egyptian politics as almost to monopolise the attention of the Government and the public. The second phase may be said to have begun about the year 1892. The Council drifted at that time into an attitude of hostility against the Government. This phase, fortunately, was of short duration, and may now be said to have entirely passed away. We have now entered the third stage, which is of good augury for the future. The members of the Legislative Council have evinced a hearty desire to co-operate with the Government in the cause of Egyptian reform. Their advice is frequently sought and readily given.....It cannot be doubted that by far the most efficacious means for ensuring a wider scope being eventually given to their

activity will be gradually to convince the Government and the public that such powers are wisely used."—('Egypt, No. 1, 1906,' p. 12.)

That is an opinion in which all must agree. But everything depends on the nature and extent of the powers that the members of the Legislative Council and other so-called representative bodies are allowed to possess and enjoined to use wisely. Though indicated mainly by hints and negatives, Lord Cromer's revelations and warnings on the subject, as expressed in the same page, are tolerably clear. Referring to "the system under which Egypt is now governed," he says:—

"I often hear that system described as a 'benevolent despotism.' If that description means that Egypt is not endowed with representative institutions based on the model of those which exist in some European countries, it is correct. But if the word 'despotism' is intended to imply an absence of control over the alleged despot, it is very far from accurate. .....In the first place, the British Agent and Consul General in Egypt is an executive officer of the British Government, and is as much under the control of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs as any other member of the diplomatic service. In the second place, behind the Secretary of State lies the control, which can at all times be exercised, of the British Parliament and of British public opinion.....It is conceivable that, at some future time, well-intentioned efforts to foster somewhat too rapidly the growth of self-governing institutions might result in the re-establishment, in another form, of personal power of the kind which, at no very remote date, did so much harm in the country, and which has left behind it habits and traditions as yet far from extinct."

In other words, although Lord Cromer declares that Egypt's present "benevolent despot" is the British Government, or the British Parliament, or the British public, or all combined, and not himself, he acknowledges the despotism, and vaguely, but explicitly enough, threatens the Egyptians with the risk of a return to the misfortune of Turkish despotism if they are dissatisfied with British despotism and desire "too rapidly the growth of self-governing institutions" which were formulated for them in the Organic Law of 1883, but which are still practically non-existent.

As no progress whatever—but, if anything, retrogression—has been made during the past three-and-twenty years in "the growth of self-governing institutions," the Egyptians have good right to ask when the keeping of Lord Dufferin's promises is to begin.

Even if no immediate change is thought expedient in the constitution and functions of the Legislative Council and General Assembly,

however, it is surely time that a vigorous start were made in giving shape and work to the long-ago projected Village Constituencies and Provincial Councils. Action in this respect ought to be of immense service to all classes of the Egyptian population, and especially its humbler classes, in advancing their legitimate interests in their several localities besides providing valuable preparation for the more comprehensive and independent duties devolving on the Egyptian Parliament, whenever a real one is brought into existence. As yet the people are almost entirely debarred from such municipal opportunities and responsibilties as the experience of all civilised communities has shown to be on every ground expedient.

Municipal Institutions.

Only four other towns besides Alexandria have any semblance of municipal life, and the irony of the whole situation is marked by the fact that Cairo is not one of them. For all its structural and sanitary arrangements, its water supply, lighting, policing, and everything else necessary to its civic development, the capital of the country is altogether at the mercy of the central authorities. It is probably owing to the larger proportion of foreigners of all races to be found in Alexandria, and the cosmopolitanism essential to it, that this port has for several years been entrusted with a measure of self-government; but not till 1904 was the Alexandria municipality allowed to appoint its own Administrator, instead of accepting the Government's nominee for the post, and all its accounts have still to be approved and audited by the Government. In the four towns of Mansurah, Fayum, Tantah, and Zagazig, "mixed municipalities"—as they are termed—have been established at the request of the inhabitants, the small revenue obtained from "voluntary taxes," and devoted to local objects, being supplemented by grants from the Government, which practically controls the whole expenditure. Twenty-five other towns, moreover, are placed by the Government under "local commissions"—of course, of its own choosing—which, raising no local funds, spend the Treasury grants assigned to them in "opening up streets, macadamising roads, building bridges, extending lighting, watering, and sweeping, &c."

In 1900 Mr. Machell, the Adviser to the Minister of the Interior, wrote, "The streets in towns where municipalities exist are well swept and watered; some of the principal thoroughfares are being macadamised; lighting is general; and progress is continually being made in the direction of gradually filling in and reclaiming the most important of the large pools in the immediate vicinity."—('Egypt, No. 1, 1900,' p. 25.)

In 1900 the discovery of extensive frauds led to a reconstruction of the Alexandria municipality, with results that justified Lord Cromer's guarded defence of this modest step in the direction of local self-government. In answer to the suggestion which seems to have been made that the disclosure of abuses in Alexandria proved the unfitness of the inhabitants for municipal functions, he wrote in his Annual Report:—"It may be replied that great improvements have, of recent years, been effected at Alexandria; that independent members of the Commission, when they became alive to the existence of abuses, fearlessly exposed them; that, as regards the octroi scandals, the difficulty of exercising an effective control over this service is notorious, and has constituted one of the principal reasons for abolishing the system; and that at Cairo, where no municipality exists, abuses of a somewhat similar character have occurred." Speaking more generally of the municipal experimenting in Egypt, he added:—

"Despite the limited nature of their resources, these local commissions have been able to effect a good deal in the way of improvement. Thus, in some places, notably in Zagazig, Assouan, and Keneh, the water supply has been improved. It is worthy of note that, during the cholera epidemic, the inhabitants of Keneh enjoyed immunity from the disease, whilst the surrounding villages were infected. Suez, Mansurah, Daminhur, and many other smaller towns have provided themselves with fire-engines and hand-pumps. In several towns, notably Suez and Beni-Suef, existing streets have been enlarged and new thoroughfares opened. The improvements already carried out by the local commissions have given rise to numerous other schemes of the same sort, which are either in process of execution—as, for example, in the installation of water at Girgeh and Sohag—or are under consideration, as is the case with almost all the other towns."—('Egypt, No. 1, 1903,' pp. 48, 49.)

"Town improvements in Egypt are still in a very embryonic stage," Lord Cromer further reported in 1904. "As time goes on, it will, without doubt, be possible to increase the Government grants; but a thorough solution of this question can only be found eventually in a general system of local taxation. My personal opinion, however, is that the time has scarcely yet arrived for the adoption of any such general system."—('Egypt, No. 1, 1905,' p. 68.)

The longer the adoption of this system is delayed, the longer the natives of Egypt are grudgingly supplied with such comforts or necessaries of municipal life as are deemed indispensable by the central

authorities, at the charge of the State—that is, by means of taxes of which the inhabitants have to pay their share, but not of local funds specifically raised for local purposes—the more mischievous delay there will be in the familiarising of the people with the methods and advantages of local self-government, in village and municipal councils, as well as in provincial councils, which are needed to fit them for proper exercise and full enjoyment of the political rights of citizenship.

Without enlarging too much on this important question, reference to two of its branches may serve to throw light on the whole.

Repression of Crime.

"The extraordinary prosperity of the fellaheen," it was reported in January, 1906, by Mr. P. W. Machell, "has whetted their appetite and created in them a lust for gain. This breeds envy, malice, and hatred. The greater amount of crime in Egypt to-day can be directly traced to these causes." —('Egypt, No. 1, 1906,' p. 115.)

This is distressing information, whether or not Mr. Machell's diagnosis is correct. In any case, it would seem to point to serious defects in the Egyptian Government's arrangements for the maintenance of order and the repression of crime in the villages and country districts. To that end—in addition to £E278,000 charged in the police budget of 1905, chiefly to be spent in the towns and in more regular police work—about £E476,000 was raised by what is known as the ghafir tax, and the tax had to be supplemented by a Government grant of £E50,000.

Ghafirs and Omdehs.

The ghafirs are a sort of village watchmen, who, before 1884, as Mr. Machell tells us, "were selected on account of their presumed capacity, and compelled to serve for a certain time; they received no pay, but were required to offer substantial guarantees, and were held responsible for all crimes committed within their jurisdiction" ('Egypt, No. 1, 1905,' p. 105). The system, after being tinkered at in the interval, was reorganised in 1896, when, their term of compulsory service being limited to one year, a minimum wage of £E0·6 (about 12*s.*) per month was appointed for ordinary ghafirs, rising to between £E0·75 and £E2 for the wekils, who are a grade above them, and between £E1 and £E3 for their sheikhs. To provide this scanty pittance the ghafir tax or cess was imposed, but the result thus far has been very unsatisfactory, and there seems small prospect of adequate improve-

ment being effected by the fresh experiments still being made on the same lines. According to Mr. Machell :—

"Large as the ghafir budget already is, we are not yet in a position in every province to offer a sufficient rate of pay to attract the best men.....If the ghafirs in general devoted less of their attention to their own safety, and more to the repression of crime, we should have little to complain of. But self-preservation is the ghafir's first thought, and upon the smallest provocation, he will discharge his gun in the hope of alarming a possible assailant. He has every interest in avoiding personal danger, and very little in doing his duty. Police reports relating how 'the ghafirs and the thieves exchanged shots, no one was injured, and the thieves effected their escape,' are far too frequent. The assailants are usually only one shade less cowardly than the ghafirs."—('Egypt, No. 1, 1906,' p. 59.)

In quoting the above scornful remarks, Lord Cromer says :—

"If a sufficient number of capable omdehs and thoroughly efficient ghafirs could be procured, almost all the difficulties connected with the maintenance of public security in the provinces would at once be solved. The difficulty is to obtain an adequate supply of capable omdehs and thoroughly efficient ghafirs."—(*Ibid.*, p. 60.)

And, explaining the position of the omdeh, or village headman Mr. Machell adds :—

"The importance of getting the best man in each village to accept the omdehship cannot be overrated. The omdeh, being the link between the Government and the governed, is an invaluable public servant. He is by no means the least zealous, but he is the least educated, the most responsible, and the most easily punished. It is not too much to say that the whole life of the village turns upon the omdeh. A strong unscrupulous man can make his village a hell upon earth as far as his adversaries are concerned, and discontent and crime are the result. Some few years ago suppression of tyranny and maltreatment of the poor was a matter of primary importance, and to attain our end we had to keep an eye chiefly on the omdeh. But the pendulum has now swung a long way over, perhaps too far, to the other direction. As time goes on the people become more enlightened, if not better educated, and even now a man may hesitate to accept an office which carries with it so much risk and so little profit.....I feel that the time has come when we must make up our minds to considerably improve the material advantages which we are prepared to offer. I cannot lay more stress than I do at present upon the importance of our endeavouring to obtain the nomination of the best men, and, when once they have been appointed, I wish to impress on everyone the necessity of adopting a proper tone towards them. Punishment, actual or threatened, still plays far too important a part in the relations of

the Government with the omdehs, and good and loyal service is apt to be taken for granted. Every one knows that a good omdeh means a good village, and it is the duty of the Administration to strain every nerve to educate, encourage and guide our local representatives."—(*Ibid.*, p. 61.)

Perhaps if Mr. Machell's sound suggestion were acted upon, and due care were taken in the treatment of ghafirs as well as omdehs, and also of the fellaheen whom they are expected to look after, there would be fewer disturbances—consequent either on the "extraordinary prosperity" or on the extraordinary misery and helplessness of the fellaheen—for unsuitable ghafirs and omdehs to make vain attempt at dealing with.

Yet more important, however, than the planning and working out of such police arrangements as will tend to the repression of crime are the planning and working out of such educational arrangements as will lessen the number of criminals and qualify the fellaheen as well as others to take their part in the management of public affairs.

Education.

"The policy which has been adopted by the Egyptian Government," writes Lord Cromer in his last report with reference to education, "has been subjected to a good deal of criticism. It has even been insinuated that the British advisers of the Government, though they are not unwilling to teach the fellaheen to read and write, and to encourage industrial schools with a view to educating craftsmen, deliberately discourage anything approaching to higher education, as they are unwilling that any steps should be taken calculated to fit the Egyptians gradually to dispense with European assistance in the government of the country." The insinuation is doubtless unjust. When the British occupation began such State outlay on education as was incurred had for its sole aim the training up of "a small privileged class, drawn mainly from the wealthiest sections of the population," with the object of procuring Europeanised officials. Lord Cromer appears to have done well in reducing or withdrawing the grants-in-aid for this purpose, and he has favoured, however insufficiently, the efforts that have been made to provide cheap and serviceable schooling for the masses. The figures quoted by him show that the numbers of pupils increased, between 1890 and 1905, from 1,961 to 8,888 in Government kuttabs (village schools) and institutions for training teachers in the kuttabs, from 5,761 to 7,175 in higher primary schools, from 734 to 1,345 in secondary schools, from 393 to 561 in technical schools, and from 382 to 743 in professional colleges; the growth of annual State expenditure thereon being from £E104,000 to £E235,000 in the

interval, and an additional £E40,000 being estimated for 1906.—('Egypt, No. 1, 1906,' pp. 82-84.)

This is movement in the right direction, but lamentably slow. According to the census of 1897, Egypt proper then contained 9,621,500 inhabitants, besides 112,500 Greeks, Italians, British, French, Austrians, Germans and Russians. There must consequently be at least half a million children of an age at which they ought to go to school. Besides the 109 Government kuttabs there are, of course, a far larger number of private kuttabs—according to the report, as many as 4,859 under Government inspection, and half of them receiving small grants-in-aid, at which 136,083 boys and 9,611 girls attended in 1905. Of these 145,694, however, "94,000 were reported to have received no instruction in writing, 87,000 had not commenced to learn arithmetic, and 68,000 had not even begun to learn to read." As a matter of fact, the Koran is almost the only subject of instruction in these schools. "At the last annual inspection of the kuttabs no less than 4,531 of the pupils were able to recite the whole of the Koran from memory, 3,538 were able to recite more than three-quarters, 4,180 more than a half, and 6,212 more than a quarter. The remainder of the scholars, being of very tender years, were at the spelling stage, or were learning the earlier chapters of the Koran."—(*Ibid.*, p. 87.)

The British controllers of the country are bound to respect the religious opinions and habits of their subjects; but they can do that without allowing the vast majority of the community to remain in the ignorance which is the principal obstacle not only to the national development for which all the more intelligent among them are yearning, but also to their profiting as individuals by such opportunities as are now open to them. Lord Cromer wrote in his report for 1904:—

"The influence of the kuttabs has hitherto tended to divert the children of the poor from their natural avocations in the fields, or in the family workshops, and to embark them on a career generally lapsing into mendicancy. The children flock to the kuttabs, not to receive instruction which will fit them for their position in life, but to commit to memory the whole of the Koran, and thereby, as reputed 'fikis' [persons able to recite the whole of the Koran and obtain a livelihood thereby], to escape from liability to military conscription. And in Egypt, a fiki, unless he be attached as a reader to a kuttab, and, except for casual employment in reciting the Koran at funerals and festivals, is virtually a beggar. According to the census of 1897, there were 107,700 craftsmen of various sorts—carpenters, black-

smiths, tailors, shoemakers, &c.—in Lower Egypt. The number of fikis, who were mostly mendicants, was no less than 100,000."—('Egypt, No. 1, 1905,' p. 87.)

In his more recent reports Lord Cromer gives evidence of a desire that ample scope should be afforded to the people of Egypt to obtain all the education they need, not only in the kuttabs and other primary schools, but also in all the higher branches, including technical, agricultural, scientific, and other colleges, up to the university for which a strong demand is now being made. But he quotes in this connection the Arab proverb, "Hurry comes from the Devil, slowness comes from God," and certainly there has been more slowness than hurry in the steps he has taken or sanctioned in these directions. The main excuse for dilatoriness, apart from the alleged unwisdom of too violently disturbing native prejudices, racial, religious, or acquired from bygone centuries of persecution and thraldom under foreign masters, is that the present Government has not funds available for the outlay involved in the sweeping reforms which are called for. Seeing how much money is spent, if not squandered, in maintaining the British occupation, and in more or less profitably trying to meet the requirements of British and other officials, traders, tourists, and so forth, no valid excuse can be made on this score for the apathy or worse with which the requirements of the Egyptians themselves are treated.

In an able article on 'The Problem of Egypt' in the number of *The Twentieth Century Quarterly* for November, 1906, Mr. John M. Robertson, M.P., with reference to the demand for development of the self-governing faculty in Egypt, aptly says: "Whatever are to be the steps in the process as regards political institutions, education of the people is a primary condition of success. If Egypt can afford any increase in expenditure, she can afford more outlay on schooling, which, rationally directed, will tend to increase native efficiency in all directions." And again, as regards the alleged increase of crime, "If a nation shows a tendency to crime—in particular to crimes of revenge—in a time of economic improvement, what would be said in any civilised country to be the proper course of correction? What is being done in civilised countries where increase of crime has been noted in a larger degree than in Egypt? The answer obtrudes itself. The cure for Egyptian morals is the cure for Egyptian politics."

IV. Present Opportunities and Obligations.

The Anglo-French Agreement and the Capitulations.

In his Annual Report for 1904, Lord Cromer described the Anglo-French Agreement signed on 8th April in that year as the herald of "a new and bright era in the history of Anglo-French relations," and said, "It cannot be doubted that that Agreement constitutes a fresh point of departure in Egyptian affairs." Therein the assurance of the British Government that it had "no intention of altering the political status of Egypt," was met by the assurance of the French Government that it "will not obstruct the action of Great Britain in that country by asking that a limit of time be fixed for the British occupation, or in any other matter." This compact having been endorsed by the Governments of Germany, Austria-Hungary. and Italy—the only European Powers whose opposition could be serious — Great Britain has fair ground for considering herself practically at liberty, provided the "political status" is not altered, to retain her hold on Egypt in perpetuity, or until she finds herself constrained by English or Egyptian opinion to surrender it. Although, moreover, the British Government is pledged by another article of the Agreement to respect the rights enjoyed by France and the other Powers "in virtue of treaties, conventions, and usage," this obligation must be interpreted by Lord Lansdowne's explanatory despatch attached to it. In that despatch, with reference to "the system known as that of the Capitulations," whereby "the internal rights of sovereignty of the Egyptian Government are subject to international interference," including "the jurisdiction of the Consular Courts and of the Mixed Tribunals," &c., Lord Lansdowne said: "In Lord Cromer's opinion the time is not ripe for any organic changes in this direction, and His Majesty's Government have not, therefore, on the present occasion, proposed any alterations in this respect. At the same time, whenever Egypt is ready for the introduction of a legislative and judicial system similar to that which exists in other civilised countries, we have sufficient grounds for counting on French co-operation"—and, presumably, that of the other Powers — "in effecting the necessary changes."—('Egypt, No. 1, 1905,' pp. 2, 3, 5.)

Abuses under the Capitulations.

It seems unfortunate that, at a time when they could have been embodied in the Agreement, Lord Cromer, in compliance with his favourite Arab proverb, "Hurry comes from the Devil, slowness comes from God," was not ready with, or did not consider that Egypt was ready for, such proposals for modifying or abolishing the Capitulations as might have been likely to conciliate the jealousies of Germany and the other Powers. But in his last two Annual Reports he shows himself anxious for the necessary reforms. In the earlier of the two he says :—

"Up to within recent times the grave defects of the existing system have only been thoroughly understood by a few, but I venture to predict that ere long, when the opinions of the thinking portion of the heterogeneous population of this country take more definite shape, that system will become almost as intolerable to those who have to live under it, whether Europeans or Egyptians, as it has long since been to those who are in any degree responsible for the government and administration of the country..... I have said that the rights conferred by the Capitulations are liable to abuse. These rights have, indeed, at times been turned to such base uses as that of affording protection to the smuggler, the keeper of a gambling hell, the vendor of adulterated drink, and their congeners. The problem which now lies before the British and Egyptian Governments is to evolve a system which, whilst maintaining everything in the existing law and practice which is essential to the well-being of the country, will put an end to the abuses to which I have alluded above..... I have no hesitation in stating why the system known by the general term of the Capitulations, as it is now practised, is wholly incompatible with the present condition of affairs in Egypt. It is because Egypt stands in the unique position of an Oriental country which has assimilated a very considerable portion of European civilisation, and which is mainly governed by European methods, but which at the same time possesses no machinery for general legislation, such as is possessed by the various States which in judicial and administrative matters, it is taking as its model. The late Nubar Pasha once described in epigrammatic phrase the judicial institutions of Egypt before the establishment of the Mixed Tribunals. He said they constituted 'a judicial Babel.' It may be said with equal truth that 'a legislative Babel' still exists. Where Europeans are concerned, legislation has, in all important affairs, to be conducted by diplomacy. Fourteen separate Powers have to agree, not merely in principle, but also in detail, before any proposed measure can become law.....This cumbersome system.....goes far to produce a condition of legislative impotence."—(*Ibid.*, pp. 6, 7.)

The mischief, moreover, is forcibly described by a recent Italian

writer, who speaks with evident knowledge and authority, although he withholds his name. He says:—

"It is certainly not for lack of tribunals that Egypt lacks justice: the sources of justice are indeed so manifold that in the end one frequently misses obtaining any. As is well known, Egypt, for some inexplicable reason, still stands outside the comity of nations. That is to say, she is still deprived of what is almost universally recognised as one of the principal attributes of sovereign power, namely, the right of dealing out her own justice. The consulates are at the same time courts of justice before which the foreigners of each particular nationality are brought to trial. Besides the consular jurisdiction stands that of the Mixed Tribunals, for the decision of cases between native and foreigner or between foreigners of different nationalities, and the composition of these tribunals is another fruitful source of confusion. .....In the meantime, the fact remains, based unfortunately on reliable statistics, that crime in Egypt not only thrives, but for the last few years has been steadily on the increase. The congregation of resident foreigners in Egypt, apart from those employed in some official business, are most likely there for no higher purpose than the accumulation of the maximum of money in the minimum of time. Their one desire is to make a fortune and to make it quickly, and rapid fortunes are usually made at somebody else's expense. Between the conflict of judges and the conflict of laws, these fortune-hunters find room to rob every one with impunity.....And so, year after year, this highly unsatisfactory state of affairs continues; the Consular Courts act with undue leniency or undue severity, and before the Mixed Tribunals code fights with code; English law, French law, Mussulman law are mingled together in inextricable confusion; new codes adopted to simplify do the very contrary, and from this bewildering maze there seems no prospect of extrication."—('The Emancipation of Egypt,' by A. Z., 1905.)

The Need for Reforms.

The need for reforms is, indeed, so great and pressing that the dilatoriness shown not merely in suggesting but in accomplishing them is discreditable to all concerned. The three instances cited by Lord Cromer might be amplified into a long catalogue of hundreds, some comparatively trivial, but others of far-reaching and life-and-death importance. To set things right much more is requisite than abolition of the Consular Courts, much more than absorption of all that is good in the methods and purposes of the Mixed Tribunals into the regular judicial machinery of the country, so improved and enlarged as to be in every way adapted to the necessities of the 9,500,000 native inhabitants of Egypt as well as to whatever may be legitimate in the demands of the 20,000 or fewer British residents or visitors, the 40,000 or so Greeks,

the 25,000 or so Italians, the 14,000 or so Frenchmen, and the 11,000 or 12,000 Austrians, Germans, Russians and others who make up what Lord Cromer rightly calls a "heterogeneous population."

The question as to the nature and scope of the reforms which it is now open to the British Representative in Cairo and his advisers to submit to the British Government, for approval and sanction by the several Powers concerned in the Capitulations, is far too comprehensive and complicated for any solution of it to be attempted here. It is for Lord Cromer to take the lead or to leave the matter in other hands. He has, in fact, already, and none too soon, started on the work, and in his Annual Report for 1905 he sketched certain proposals, some of which have been actually submitted to and approved by the European Governments most interested in them. These latter, however, have not yet been published, and they appear only to cover part, perhaps a small part, of the ground. Meanwhile, though he clearly recognises the necessity, if the "judicial Babel" is to be swept away, of also, if not soonest, getting rid of the "legislative Babel," he appears to be deliberately or unintentionally blind to the concurrent if not the antecedent steps which ought to be taken to secure intelligent adoption by the Egyptians of so much in these measures as may be really acceptable and serviceable to them. He writes:—

Lord Cromer's Proposals.

"It cannot be doubted that the absence of any supreme legislative body, the want of uniformity in judicial matters, and the restricted power of the Executive Government, which exist in this country, give rise to numerous anomalies, and materially increase the difficulties of government and administration. Egyptians appear to regard the special privileges accorded to Europeans with a growing disfavour, which is sometimes justifiable, and which even when not altogether justifiable is extremely natural. I think I shall not be accused of inaccuracy if I say that in the eyes of most thinking Egyptians, the direction which reform should take is that of abolishing European privilege, and of assimilating the institutions, whether legislative, executive, or judicial, which are applicable to all dwellers on Egyptian soil. This aspiration is not only perfectly legitimate; it is also, from every point of view, praiseworthy."—('Egypt, No. 1, 1905,' pp. 5, 6.)

Yet what is Lord Cromer doing to gratify and utilise this perfectly legitimate and, from every point of view, praiseworthy aspiration? While proposing, as he does in his report for 1905 ('Egypt, No. 1, 1906,' pp. 3–8), that a "Mixed Council," or sort of Alien Parliament, shall be set up in Cairo, "wholly composed of subjects or protected subjects of the

Powers that were parties to the institution of the Mixed Tribunals," to agree upon common laws for their several "colonies," he makes no proposal for rendering the Egyptian General Assembly and Legislative Council less of shams than they are now. In fact, he prefaces his scheme by saying, "No change is proposed in the composition or functions of the existing Legislative Council and Assembly." It is the authority of the Executive Government, as a mere tool in the hands of the British Administrator, not the authority of the Legislative Council, as an exponent of the wishes and champion of the rights of the Egyptian people, which he desires to strengthen and enlarge. He says frankly :—

"My personal opinion, based on a long experience of this country, and on a careful consideration of its present condition, is that the only solution which can produce really satisfactory results would be that the Powers should transfer to Great Britain the legislative functions which they now collectively possess.....A change of this sort would merely be the natural and logical outcome of the new position now occupied by the British Government in Egypt. I have only to add that, whether this or any other solution be adopted, I feel convinced that, so long as the present cumbersome and unworkable system of legislation exists, it will be practically impossible to adapt the laws of Egypt to the growing requirements of the country."—(P. 8.)

The Crux of the Situation.

It cannot be too strongly insisted that, unless and until the laws of Egypt are adapted to the growing requirements of the country and of the vast majority of its inhabitants, no adequate improvement upon the present cumbersome and unworkable system of legislation, or upon the present very unsatisfactory relations between those who make and those who are expected to obey the laws, will be possible.

Let full justice be done to Lord Cromer for his share—the leading share—in all the "benevolent despotism" that has been maintained and expanded in Egypt ever since its occupation by the British in 1882. But the Egyptians have waited long enough—far too long—for the self-government which was promised to them from the first, and which all the best informed and most capable of them are not only willing, but anxious, to exercise without throwing off or forfeiting the legitimate guidance, restraint, and protection of Great Britain, which was promised when Lord Dufferin was sent in 1883 to organise the British control undertaken by Mr. Gladstone's Government, but for the proper working out of which opportunity was considered to

be wanting before the Anglo-French agreement of 1904 had been entered into.

That agreement has cleared the way for cancelling of the obstructive Capitulations. But the Capitulations were—and still are—in some respects useful. The consular jurisdiction which it is now proposed promptly to supersede, however liable to abuse, afforded an asylum, not only for native as well as alien wrongdoers seeking shelter from justice, but also, in certain contingencies, for honest victims, whether native or alien, of persecution. Under the new conditions the honest aliens may reckon upon being sufficiently cared for by their consuls and other fellow-countrymen. The Egyptian natives can have no such assurance so long as their country is without self-government, and remains under the present "benevolent despotism."

One prominent illustration will serve to indicate a danger which, in other directions as well as in this, is serious. Thanks to the Capitulations, Egypt now enjoys a remarkable measure of Press freedom. There are many successful newspapers—Opposition journals as moderate as *Al Moayad* and *Al Minbar*, as well as revolutionary organs as violent as *Al Lewa*—which the British controllers would readily suppress if they could. They cannot do so at present, as the proprietors of any proscribed journal would at once seek the protection of the French or any other consulate, and in this way might be able to defy the British authorities, under conditions more favourable to them than those prevailing on a memorable occasion, many years ago, when the *Bosphore Egyptien*, while profiting by French protection, was constrained to moderate its attacks on British policy. Were consular protection abolished and all authority vested in officials, including judges, policemen, gaolers, and other functionaries, really under the thumb of the British Administration, the offenders against it, whether worthy or unworthy, would be at the mercy of a despotism only benevolent when and in so far as its wielders chose that it should be so.

To what a perilous extent the whole Egyptian population is already at the mercy of a despotism whose wielders have full faith in their own benevolence is shown by the Denshawai incident. Doubtless the five British officers who went out for a day's sport in shooting other people's pigeons last June had no thought of dealing unfairly with the villagers who resented this intrusion, and considered that the villagers were without excuse for their angry resistance. Doubtless, too, the judges hastily deputed to try the offenders in arbitrary fashion, the

officials who appointed them, and the other officials who applauded their sentencing of four men to death and seventeen others to smaller penalties for their participation in the brawl, were and still are of opinion that they did no more than uphold the dignity of Great Britain and its reputation for unswerving justice in dealing with "inferior races." To Egyptians, however, and to all the rest of the world, this outrage appears as a shameful blunder, only to be atoned for by zealous and persistent effort to prevent any recurrence of such a catastrophte if not also as an example of the callousness and unscrupulousness with which even British officers and gentlemen are apt to forget and scandalously violate their duties to themselves, their country, and the less civilised fellow-creatures entrusted to their care. Be that as it may, the Denshawai incident is startling evidence, and goes far to be in itself conclusive proof, of the prevalence of evils that are being aggravated by Lord Cromer's present policy, and of the urgent necessity for drastic reforms, of a sort not recognised by him as called for, in Egypt as it now fares under British control.

These reforms, drastic as they must be if they are to be at all commensurate with the requirements of the situation, should merely aim at carrying out to the fullest extent the equitable proposals that Lord Dufferin initiated and Lord Cromer undertook to comply with more than twenty years ago. The time may come, and the sooner the better, when Egypt will be able to stand alone as one of the civilised nations, with or without such guaranteed neutrality as is already proposed for her by some of her friends. But that, although strictly in accordance with Lord Dufferin's proposals, and presumably looked forward to by the British Government that instructed him, cannot be at once. What is wanted at once is that effective steps shall be taken by the British authorities to set up for Egypt such a working machinery of self-government as will enable the Khedieve and his Ministers delivered from virtual subordination to English "advisers," to be guided and, when necessary, controlled by a Parliament really representative of the Egyptian people. Such action, expedient and even obligatory in itself, would only be in accordance with the British Government's pledge, given by Lord Granville in January, 1883, "to withdraw its troops so soon as a system capable of protecting the authority of the Khedive should be organized."

As preliminary and accessory to the military evacuation of Egypt, however, if not also to the setting up in complete form of the requisite

machinery of self-government, an immediate necessity is loyal observance of the stipulations which Lord Cromer himself described as "essential" in January, 1885. The stipulations were, as he declared, "that there should be no division of authority in Egypt, that the Egyptian Government should feel that it is not only nominally but really responsible for the conduct of the Egyptian Administration, and that the action of the British Representative should not be such as to weaken or undermine the authority of the Khedive and his Ministers." From his own admissions we know that Lord Cromer now entirely ignores that "essential," and that the "benevolent despotism" he exercises is only limited by such restraints as may be imposed upon him by the British Government and British Parliament.

To the British Government and British Parliament appeal is now made against that "benevolent despotism."

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